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Book review

Beyond the horizon – Swedish air reconnaissance against the Soviet Union 1946-1952.

By Andreas Ohlsson

Authors *Lennart Andersson* and *Leif Hellström* have written many books on Swedish air history. In *Bortom horisonten* (Beyond the horizon) they focus on the post-war air reconnaissance against the Soviet Union, which started out seriously during the years immediately following the end of World War II.



The authors' starting-point is the reports about the ghost rockets that baffled our Defence forces in 1946. A large number of sightings of what appeared like missiles were reported from all over Sweden. All in all the Defence Staff

counted almost one thousand reports coming to the knowledge of authorities. Second only to the ghost flier's of the 1930, the ghost rockets are regarded as the first UFO phenomena to hit Sweden.

It is interesting that Andersson and Hellström put these sightings into a historical perspective and connect them to contemporary Swedish air reconnaissance on Soviet. 1946 was the year when Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson died and Tage Erlander took over. The ghost rocket phenomena were to be detected by radar systems that the Swedish military wanted to borrow from Great Britain. The connections to Great Britain were, however, considered as political dynamite in view of our neutrality. Thus the secret British force, under the name Task Force 196, which was to aid our military with radar equipment and knowledge, was not welcome here.

Despite this, exchange of information about the ghost rockets between Sweden and Great Britain continued. The United States was, up until the early 1950's, unsure about what side Sweden really was on – the West or the East. Maybe even the Soviet deep level defence was enhanced if the U.S. contributed technical materials to Sweden...? When Great Britain's economy deteriorated after 1947, the U.S. became more and more active in Europe and also the connections to Sweden intensified.

The fear of what the contemporary Soviet Union had on line was great. Some military speculated about rocket firing ramps in the Baltic states or at Peenemünde; that it was from these places that the Swedish ghost rockets were sent off. Reconnaissance photos, taken by Swedish air force pilots in 1949, of the island of Ösel (off Estonia), were part of trying to find rocket bases there.

Fears were that Soviet had taken over German technology and continued to develop V1- and V2-weapons into effective rockets with a long range. Someone must have manoeuvred the weapons and therefore Sweden attempted to trace the remote-control signals that the enemy must use. What has been revealed is that Soviet made test shots of at least twelve V2 rockets on October 18, 1947 and forward in time. The rocket tests were made at Kapustin Yar at the Caspian Sea. Neither times, nor places, match up with the sightings made over Sweden and parts of Scandinavia.

Speculations about the sightings over Sweden were many and the material was classified immediately. Every sighting was not possible to explain, although most were due to an unusual number of bright meteors burning through the atmosphere, even during daylight. The ghost rocket phenomenon occupies an important part of this book, which in the main, describes, in much detail, foolhardy Swedish reconnaissance flights against Soviet. Andersson and Hellström has written an important book, putting the ghost rocket reports of 1946 into a security-political framework.

Lennart Andersson & Leif Hellström: Bortom horisonten – svensk flygspaning mot Sovjetunionen 1946-1952. Freddy Stenboms förlag, Stockholm, 2002. ISBN 91-7243-015-X.

When RAF Task Force 196 almost came to Sweden.

In *Svensk Flyghistorisk Tidskrift* (published semi-monthly by the Swedish Aviation Historical Society), issue 3/2002, Sven Löv, writes a short article concerning the ghost rockets. We translate here the passages containing new information that confirm what was found at the Public Record Office by British researchers David Clarke and Andy Roberts (*Out of the Shadows*, Piatkus 2002, pp. 29-30). Mr. Löv has also visited the Public Record Office and has had contact by letter with one of the members of Task Force 196.

“...The Swedish Air Force had splendid connections with the Royal Air Force. The RAF was prepared to assist with the search. In July, a couple of men came to Sweden to analyse reported sightings and to confer with our Air

Force. Nothing substantial came out of those meetings.

“In England the RAF established a Task Force, consisting of a radar group with the very latest and most modern equipment. Task Force 196, as it was named, was gathered at Heathrow and made ready to be shipped to Sweden. The group was motorised and self-supporting, an independent operative unit. Everything was top secret, the official version was that the radar group was to demonstrate the use of radar as a tool for modern air control. The Swedish Air Force had just received their first Vampire jets and it was a part of the training of Vampire crews that the radar group should assist with....

“...In early August, Swedish Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson started to doubt the wisdom of bringing the RAF to Sweden. Negotiations with Britain suddenly halted and no decision could be reached. On August 22 the message came: The project was aborted. The British were irritated, to say the least, over the decision and the British legation report to London was appended with the commentary: “...the Swedish Prime Minister has been both stupid and cowardly...”.

“The British Air Attaché [in Stockholm] made contact with General Nordenskiöld, chief of the Swedish Air Force, who was very upset by the [Prime Minister's] decision. In the attaché report Nordenskiöld is claimed to have said that, if a similar situation should come up, the matter should be handled “...without reference to the Political Department at all.”

Danish report archive to AFU

On March 18, Clas Svahn and Andreas Ohlsson, from the AFU and UFO-Sweden boards, and Håkan Ekstrand from UFO-Sweden, brought the complete Danish report archive of SUFOI (Scandinavian UFO Information – www.ufo.dk) to AFU's premises. SUFOI started out in 1958 as an Adamski-oriented organization, but changed its policy, and board members, in the mid-1960s and has since turned into a more and more sceptical research group.

The report archive, in its raw form, measures about 4-5 meters on our shelves and includes report forms, notes of investigations, clippings

and photos. A preliminary sorting has been done. Discussions are now underway with the SUFOI board on how the archive shall best be preserved and taken care of for the future.

AFU has previously taken care of parts of Danish skeptic-librarian **Willy Wegner's** (www.skeptica.dk) UFO newsclipping collection, magazines and photos; parts of former SUFOI chairman **Per Andersen's** collection of UFO materials; and also the more 'odd' things in the SUFOI *magazine* archive. Along with the SUFOI report archive AFU also received packages of magazine copies from SUFOI researcher Ole Henningsen.

The AFU library has about 175 titles in Danish. Willy Wegner's great bibliography on Scandinavian UFO literature is at:
www.skeptica.dk/Bibliografi/bibliografi.htm
For pictures and more details about recent donations to AFU check up -
www.afu.info/recdons.html.

Book cataloguing project

Since January 2003 the complete AFU book library is inventoried. An Access database (developed by *Wolfgang Randisek* and updated by *Barbro Gustavsson*) is updated by *Anders Liljegren* with new information, such as: different editions of the same title, number of copies of each title/edition, ISBN numbers, and info about who donated the first copy to our collection - if known.

The database content is reality-checked against what's really on our shelves. The project has just reached letter "M" and will be complete by this spring/summer, when the database will be searchable at our web site (www.afu.info). We are adding a good number of previously non-catalogued items, such as small booklets from religious cults, books on astronomy, parapsychology, channelling, science fiction, etc, to the catalogue. We are also adding new titles added to the collection in 2002-2003 (presently more than 200 titles).

The original Condon report

One of the people Clas Svahn met on a recent tour to south-Sweden and Denmark was Swedish astronomer **Bertil Anders Lindblad**, known for

his research on meteors and bolides in the atmosphere. Lindblad donated a copy of the original (1968) U.S. government printing of the Condon report, a truly unique piece... Thanks!

New parapsychology library

The Swedish Society for Parapsychological Research (SPF), with 209 members, started, in October 2002, to move its library of books and magazines to new facilities in Danderyd, one of the Stockholm suburbs.

The collection has previously been managed by a sub-section of the Stockholm University Library, but the new facility will make it possible for members and others to make more direct use of the collection. So far, 30 meters of shelves have been moved and yet another 30 meters are still waiting to be moved from the University. A list of books bought in recent years is at <http://psi-sweden.org/books.html>.

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■ **Membership in Sweden:** by annual donation of 150 SEK each year to postal giro no 49 07 14-3, or by annual donation of materials for the archive equivalent to 150 SEK.

■ **International exchanges:** we are always interested in exchange deals with publishers of newsletters, journals, monographs or other media. The Newsletter is NOT available through subscription outside of Sweden. Materials you send us will always be catalogued and saved for posterity, and future research, at the archives.

■ **Sponsorship:** Sponsorship of the AFU foundation is most welcome, whether you live in Sweden, or in any other country. Minimum annual donation by sponsors is 600 SEK (or equal amount in any other currency), but more substantial monetary donations are, of course, welcome, as well as donations / depositions of records & materials related to the UFO subject (*single pieces or collections* of books, newsletters, magazines, reports, clippings, photos, audio & video recordings, microfilms, etc)